

Via Facsimile: (703) 872-9306

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PATENT

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method of performing service diagnostics on appliances, the method comprising:

connecting a diagnostic interface to a local area appliance network;

accessing an appliance in the local area appliance network; and

performing service diagnosis of the appliance through said diagnostic interface over the local area appliance network using service functions in the appliance.
2. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the local area appliance network comprises a power line carrier system.
3. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein accessing further comprises accessing a dedicated appliance controller in an appliance.
4. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the service functions comprise safety functions, parameter functions, and appliance status functions.
5. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 ~~wherein the service functions comprise appliance parameter functions~~ further comprising implementing said diagnostic interface in a computer.
6. (canceled)
7. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising connecting to a remote system to retrieve service diagnostic information.

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8. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein performing service diagnosis includes diagnosing and servicing the appliance based on the appliance diagnosis.

9. (original) The method of claim 8 wherein servicing the appliance comprises patching appliance firmware.

10. (original) The method of claim 8 wherein servicing the appliance comprises adjusting appliance parameters.

11. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising maintaining an external database of appliance information based on diagnosis of the appliance.

12. (original) A diagnostic interface for performing service diagnostics on appliances, the diagnostic interface comprising:

a display for viewing diagnostic and service information;

processing circuitry for generating service commands for an appliance; and

a power line carrier communication interface for transmitting the service commands to the appliance and receiving appliance diagnostic results on a power line carrier communication system.

13. (original) The diagnostic interface of claim 12 further comprising an appliance bus interface for communicating with the appliance.

14. (original) The diagnostic interface of claim 12 further comprising a remote service center interface.

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15. (original) The diagnostic interface of claim 14 wherein the diagnostic interface gathers appliance statistics to send to a remote service center over the remote service center interface.

16. (original) The diagnostic interface of claim 12 further comprising a user interface to facilitate service diagnostics.

17. (original) The diagnostic interface of claim 12 wherein the appliance comprises a refrigerator.

18. (original) The diagnostic interface of claim 12 wherein the appliance comprises an oven.

19. (original) The diagnostic interface of claim 12 wherein the appliance comprises a heating system.

20. (original) The diagnostic interface of claim 12 wherein the appliance comprises a cooling system.

21. (original) The diagnostic interface of claim 12 wherein the appliance comprises a lighting system.

22. (original) A diagnostic system for providing access to service diagnostics on an appliance, the system comprising:

a diagnostic interface for accepting service diagnostics commands destined for the appliance;

a local area appliance network coupled to the appliance and the diagnostic interface; and

a dedicated appliance controller for receiving and executing the diagnostics commands.

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23. (original) The system of claim 22 wherein the local area appliance network comprises a power line carrier network.

24. (original) The system of claim 22 wherein the diagnostic interface comprises a computer.

25. (currently amended) The system of claim 22 wherein the diagnostics interface comprises a laptop computer, a display device, a microprocessor, a PC card interface, a power line carrier modem, and an appliance bus interface.

26. (original) The system of claim 22 further comprising a communications interface between the local area appliance network and the dedicated appliance controller.

27. (original) The system of claim 22 further comprising a remote system, the remote system connectable to the diagnostic interface via an Internet connection.

28. (original) The system of claim 22 wherein the dedicated appliance controller is contained within the appliance.

29. (new) The system of claim 22 wherein the diagnostic interface comprises a power line carrier modem which allows the diagnostic interface to communicate with an appliance via a power line carrier system.